



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 198

February Session, 2004

House Bill No. 5573

House of Representatives, March 23, 2004

The Committee on General Law reported through REP. FOX of the 144th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING CLOSED-CAPTIONING.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2004*) (a) As used in this
2 section:

3 (1) "Closed-captioning services" means services that are (A)
4 designed for persons with hearing disabilities that provide a live or
5 prerecorded visual presentation of the sound associated with a
6 television program, and (B) not visible except on a television receiver
7 designed to display such services or by use of an installed decoder.

8 (2) "Broadcast news program" means any news program produced
9 and broadcasted in this state, including, but not limited to, any sports,
10 weather, emergency, legislative, educational, governmental or health
11 program.

12 (b) On or before January 1, 2006, all television stations located in this
13 state shall provide closed-captioning services for all broadcast news

14 programs.

This act shall take effect as follows:	
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2004</i>

GL *Joint Favorable*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill requires all television stations in the state to provide closed-captioning services. There is no fiscal impact.

OLR Bill Analysis

HB 5573

AN ACT CONCERNING CLOSED-CAPTIONING**SUMMARY:**

This bill, beginning on January 1, 2006, requires all television stations located in the state to provide closed-captioning services for all broadcast news programs. It defines "closed-captioning services" as those that are (1) designed for people with hearing disabilities that provide a live or prerecorded visual presentation of the sound associated with a television program and (2) not visible except on a television that is designed to display the services or that uses an installed decoder. It defines "broadcast news programs" as news programs produced and broadcasted in this state including sports, weather, emergency, legislative, educational, governmental, and health programs.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2004

BACKGROUND***Federal Law on Closed-Captioning of News Broadcasts***

The 1996 federal Telecommunications Act and its implementing regulations adopted by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) generally require programming to be closed-captioned. The requirement is being phased-in and will be complete in 2006.

The act allows the FCC to adopt implementing regulations and to exempt certain programs and services by regulation if it finds that complying with them would be economically burdensome. The regulations state that programming captioned with Electronic News Room technology in many television markets (including Hartford-New Haven) can be counted toward meeting this requirement. This technology displays the Teleprompter feed as captions. It is not capable of captioning unscripted materials, such as live "on the scene" news reports.

The regulations will require, in the top 25 television markets (including New York and Boston), television stations owned or affiliated with ABC, CBS, Fox, and NBC to caption in real time beginning on January 1, 2006. Real-time captioning is capable of displaying the words spoken by on-the-scene reporters. This means that, beginning on January 1, 2006, federal law will require an “on the scene” reporter’s remarks to be captioned if he is broadcasting from a top-25 market network station (e.g. New York or Boston) but not if he is broadcasting from a smaller market station (e.g. Hartford-New Haven).

COMMITTEE ACTION

General Law Committee

Joint Favorable Report

Yea 19 Nay 0